(b) what time-frame has been set up for this conversion;

(c) whether this change-over would generate more for additional lines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof for each of the metros?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) The seven digit telephone number has been converted into eight digit in metro cities to increase the number space to cater to future growth of metro areas, to reduce the need for frequent coordination between various operators and to make the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) national number length uniform throughout the country.

(b) No specific time frame has been set up.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) About six crores additional number space in each metro would be generated.

**V.P.T. in Assam**

2998. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages covered by the Village Public Telephone facility in Assam;

(b) the number of such villages in the State where the aforesaid facility is not available; and

(c) the number of such telephones proposed to be granted in the remaining villages of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) In Assam 17,155 Villages have been provided with telecom facility upto 31.10.2002.

(b) 7530 villages are yet to be covered; and

(c) All the remaining villages are planned to provided with telecom facility progressively by August, 2003 subject to availability of resources.

**Corporation in Indian Postal Service**

†2999. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to corporatise the Indian Postal Service;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when the outline for same is likely to be prepared by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

**Non-availability of telephone facilities**

3000. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and the North Eastern Region where telephone facilities are not available;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of villages in these States where telephone facilities were provided during the year 2001-02; and

(d) the effective measures being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) The number of villages

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.